/113 cont./

526 between two men embracing each other, which is performed in a sitting position (see p. 233); the tug of war (see p. 244); and the throwing of wet earth at one another (see p. 244).

●539 [115] IX. Myths and Legends

The following myths and legends were told me by the Surára chief Hewemão:

The Creation of the Yanonámi

The earth already existed and was full of plants and animals, but as yet was without human beings. But one day the first man, Uruhí, came out of the leg of the xiapó, a small bird with black and yellow feathers similar to the japim. A short time later the bird-leg gave birth to a second man, then a third, a fourth, and finally a woman, Petá. These four men and the woman lived together in perfect harmony. Petá, to be sure, was the wife of Uruhí, the first-born, but the other three brothers also had the right to have sexual intercourse with her (552).

[835] 552. Among the Surára and Pakidái, the younger, unmarried brothers likewise have the right to have sexual intercourse with the wives of their elder brothers. Moreover, the members of both tribes believe that a woman is able to have strong children only if she has frequent intercourse with other men during her pregnancy. [843]

After a year Petá gave birth to a strong, healthy boy who grew rapidly and called all four men "father" (553). The boy's

[601] 553. The Surára and Pakidái children also call the unmarried brother of their father, not uncle, but likewise father.

Surára
Pakidái

/113 cont./

539 chief delight was to kill small birds with his little bow and arrow. But one night, for fun, /114/ he aimed at the moon and shot off his arrow. At once an eclipse of the moon set in. Blood dripped down and poured like a flood over the entire earth (554). From this blood came all the Yanonámi, that is,

[784]
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554. For this reason the Surára and Pakidái children are strictly forbidden to this day to shoot their arrows in the direction of the moon.

the Surára, Pakidái, Puseheweterí, Aramamesterí, Xiriána, Karauaterí, Waiká, etc. (see p. 12).

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The Origin of Fire

The virgin forest with its wealth of plants and fruits was already created, and human beings, as well as all kinds of animals were living upon the earth. Only fire was still lacking. Besides their vegetable food, the human inhabitants were therefore able to eat only raw meat, and at night they shivered in their hammocks. They knew, however, that the cayman (jacaretinga) had fire in its mouth. Despite all entreaties, it would not give up any of it. So people resorted to a ruse. They asked the hummingbird to fly around the cayman and make jokes. At first the cayman was unmoved and took no notice of the little bird. But finally he could not suppress his laughter any longer, whereupon fire shot out of his opened mouth. The people were very happy about it and thanked the hummingbird extravagantly.

2: Becher--249 E-5 (1955-1956) 1960 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Surára

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The Origin of the Banana

In olden times the Surára men were only hunters, and the women gathered the fruits of the jungle. They were unacquainted as yet with any kind of agriculture. One morning, however, when the Surára man Horonamú had arisen especially early and stepped out in front of the maloka, he saw to his astonishment peculiar large plants full of fruits. Immediately he wanted to pick one, but the voice of Poré, the lord of the moon, who, along with the latter, represents the supreme divine power (see p. 197), caused him to stiffen. Poré, however, in a very friendly way, said that he had grown these plants for the Surára and that their name was kuratá. He then ordered him to inform all the members of the tribe that the kuratá should be cultivated, for with it they would never have to suffer hunger again and would not have to rely solely on hunting luck. When Horonamú wanted to express his gratitude, Poré had already disappeared.

The First Pupunha Palms

The Surára were already acquainted with the banana tree, and this was the first plant that they cultivated. One night a japim (Cacicus cela L.) came flying and, on orders from Poré, planted pupunha palms (Guilielma speciosa Mart.) between the banana trees. Early in the morning it wakened the Surára with a particularly loud song, and when they stepped outside their maloka in astonishment, it told them that this palm was called komunamá and its fruits -- araxá -- were good for eating as well as for making a refreshing drink.

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The Creation of the Jibóia-vermelha

Once upon a time there lived the Surára Karemoná, who was very quarrelsome by nature. Every day he mistreated his two wives and quarreled with the other men. He never submitted to the orders of the chief and even tried to undermine the

/114 cont./
539 discipline of the tribe. Since all admonitions were of no avail, he was banished from the community.

Karemoná painted his body with urucú and left the maloka. After he had wandered about in the forest for a few hours, he lay down wearily on the ground and fell asleep. While he was asleep Poré transformed him into the jibóia-vermelha (Epicrates cenchris) -- oatá -- because of his insubordination.

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The Creation of the Black Jaguar

The Surára were already acquainted with clearing by burning and cultivated banana trees and pupunha palms. One day they saw a large toad in the forest clearing. A Surára wanted to kill it, but it fled to the other /115/ side of the roça (forest clearing) and there turned into a black jaguar.

The Creation of the Tapir

A cuatá monkey fell from a tall tree and was unable to climb up again. After several unsuccessful attempts, it turned into a tapir.

The Creation of Wild Pigs

A band of cuxiú monkeys fell from a tall tree. After futile attempts at climbing up again they were transformed into wild pigs.

The Creation of the Ant Bear

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A Surára man who had raped his mother-in-law was turned into an ant bear by Poré as punishment. Since then there has been in-law avoidance between mother-in-law and son-in-law, and the meat of the ant bear may not be eaten by members of the tribe.

/231 cont./

This latter instrument in the hands of the priest-doctor might cause one to err by identifying him with the shaman, although actually the maraca of a priest and that of a shaman are considered by the Warao as essentially different. The powers of the maraca of the priest are guaranteed by the kareko stones which are inside it, a second category of spirits which belong to the court of God. The stones in the maraca of the shaman represent other powers. So, although morphologically both instruments have the same origin, functionally they have become specialized, probably in different fashion, by our Indians. Warao shamanism is based on the conception of the existence of an immanent essence in all objects which can only be freed by the power of the shaman for the purpose of being directed toward someone's body. Each shaman has also the power to extract this type of essence from a person, that is, to cure him of his sickness. The shaman cures by smoking, emitting smoke and blowing, and, when he does so, he must rest his hand on the affected part, while he allows to pass through his mind numerous images of objects, until he fixes his attention on a special one which is the object which caused the sickness, as a result of which the spirit immediately jumps to his hand or to the maraca. The magician, finally, takes out from the body of a person or puts into it material objects, the causes of sickness.

Warao priests are specialized to a high degree. They must observe special taboos regarding food, which must be cooked only by their wives in a fire newly kindled for it and in a special pot. They eat apart from the others, live in their own house, and must not perform any strenous work. Ideally, they make their living from their office (Wilbert, 1957a, 1960a).

/232/ We publish below some mythological details on which we were able to take notes.

OMAO AND SOAO

In the beginning there was a pregnant woman. One day the Great Jaguar came and devoured the woman. When he came to the uterus he wanted to eat it also, but at that very moment a toad appeared and told him that one ought not to eat that thing. The Jaguar left the uterus in the forest and went away.

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• 539 The toad picked up the uterus and took it home. After some months there came out of it two male twins to whom it gave the names Omao and Soao. The two boys were brothers, but the toad was not their "mother," in spite of its having fed them and protected them from all dangers.

One day the Jaguar returned again and heard the two young men talking. Then he realized what had happened, and he tried to kill the two brothers. But they gave a tremendous jump and climbed a gigantic tree. They remained there for a long time, eating the fruit of the tree. The Jaguar kept waiting for them and coveting their delicious food. Therefore he planned to climb the tree also, but when he came close to them they jumped off into space. The Jaguar followed them, but his luck did not hold, and on falling he hit the ground so hard that he died.

The two brothers went off to the forest. They were alone. The solitude was overwhelming. They decided to create man. They tried to make the males out of very hard wood so that they would not die. They therefore began going through the forest in search of the strongest tree. They found many, but Omao was not satisfied and continued searching. His brother Soao became discouraged and completely lost his patience; he took out his ax, felled the closest tree, and began to make men. When Omao arrived on the scene and saw the tree which his brother had felled, he became extremely sad, for he foresaw that men would die young for lack of strength. He became furious with his brother, and grabbing him by the arm, he threw him to the ground on top of a nest of wasps who stung him so much that he fled in panic, running and shouting, through the forest.

Sometimes polished axes are found in the forest; they are those of Omao, with which he felled four very strong trees. But he did not make men out of them, but snakes, which do not die since by changing the skins they are continually rejuvenated.

Then Omao and Soao wished to create women, and, as Soao was an excellent fisherman, Omao made him a fishhook so that he might go to the river to fish. But Soao lost the hook and came back empty-handed. Omao made another stronger hook for him.

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•539 This time Soao pulled out an enormous fish. Omao put it in /233/ a basket, saying that it was his wife and that Soao must not touch it. Soao did not touch her despite the fact that she was very beautiful.

One day Omao told his brother that he wished to make a wife for him and also for the other men, that he was going to the shore and that he must take good care of his sister-in-law, being very careful not to touch her.

Omao went off and after walking a great distance came to the bank of a large river. There he found a great number of beautiful butterflies. From them he decided to create a wife for his brother and women for the other men. The butterflies were very wary and fled every time that Omao approached them. Then Omao changed himself into a fly and put out some sweet bait in order to attract the prey. But all was lost because at the very moment of catching the most beautiful butterfly Omao heard a scream which he identified as one from his wife. In fact, Soao, tired of waiting for his brother and for his wife, lost patience, opened the basket which his sister-in-law was in, and attempted to cohabit with her. But she gave a tremendous scream and escaped. The butterflies became frightened and fled from the shore.

Omao, angered by this, left his brother alone on the earth and went to heaven.

THE SUN AND THE MOON

[221] The sun is a man and the moon is also a man. The two regard each other as enemies because of the occurrence which I shall relate.

One day the moon told a man to go and look for firewood. The man went off to look for it. When he brought it, he did not please the moon, who wanted a great deal more. Again it sent him into the forest. Then the man realized that what the moon wanted was to eat him. Then the man fled. He ran to the sun in search of asylum and protection. The sun hid him. When the moon arrived in search of him, the sun said that it had not seen the man. The moon, angered, insisted and even wanted

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539 to search the sun's house. Then the sun burned its surface and from that came the scars which show on its face.

The moon went to the other side of the world, and, while the sun sealed its friendship with man, the moon was his ir-
539 reconcilable enemy. When the moon appears rose-colored, it
821 is because it, along with its family, is eating men. The sun also has a family, but does not eat human flesh. Sometimes the moon hides in its house in order to plan a new campaign.
[532] During that time women are very much afraid and, in order to
[751] protect themselves, paint a likeness of the sun on their cheeks; they also commonly paint it on large stones which they find on the path.

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OINEITĨB

539 Beneath the earth there exists the world of the dwarfs, who
[772] are called Oineitĩb. They live like men, but eat and speak very rapidly. They have no intestines or anus, and when they eat meat or other food, they cut it in pieces and swallow it raw, without chewing (25). They sometimes also eat women who conceal

[171] 25. See also the corresponding myth of the Yupa Indians of Venezuela (Wilbert, 1959d).

their menstruation. On one occasion the subterranean river grew so much that it acquired an enormous volume and gained so much strength that it blew out the earth beneath the ground of the rancheria in which there lived a woman who had tried to conceal her state. The houses collapsed and the inhabitants drowned, with the exception of the women, who were devoured by the dwarfs and their souls went to live forever with the guapo, who is also unable to go up to heaven and live with Omao.

Because the dwarfs have no intestines, they are always hungry and, for that reason, devour their food with much greediness. On occasion one of these dwarfs comes to earth to visit a man, but never a woman. The man cannot see his guest, but

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• 539 feels his presence because a devouring hunger attacks him. When the man realizes what is happening, he begins to eat greedily and immediately goes to see the sablf so that he will get rid of the importunate dwarf.

THE WOMAN WHO TURNS INTO A PECCARY

A man wished to go hunting for peccaries and asked his wife to go with him. The woman was having her menstrual period but said nothing to her husband. The two of them met a small band of peccaries in the forest. The man made his wife climb a tree while he prepared to kill the wild pigs. Hardly had the hunter left the place when a peccary appeared at the foot of the tree. It changed into a man and climbed the tree in order to carry the woman off. When the hunter returned, he began to search painstakingly for his wife, but he did not find her. He ran back to the rancheria and told his companions what had happened. The latter decided to follow the tracks of the woman. The sablf placed himself at the head of the retinue, which advanced in Indian file.

Soon the group met a man who called himself haʷmõ and who gave off flames from his belly. They asked him if he had seen a woman in the vicinity. The man answered that he had seen a woman whose upper part had been changed into a peccary when she had tried to pass under a fallen log on all fours, and that she was accompanied by many men and women.

The Sanemá continued the search, and the haʷmõ man accompanied them. /235/ Toward dusk the men hung their hammocks very close together because it was cold. One of them, still half asleep, attempted to revive the fire by blowing strongly, but he made a mistake and blew on the fire of the haʷmõ, who turned into a guinea hen and flew away.

On the following day, very early in the morning, the men continued to look for the abducted woman. After they had walked for quite a long time, they heard the sound of an ax; someone was cutting trees. It was pólawan, the jaguar who always follows the peccaries. He was cutting firewood in order to roast a peccary which he had just killed. He had seen the woman almost completely

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539 transformed into a peccary; only her feet were still human. All those who accompanied her belonged to a great herd of peccaries. The pŏlawan offered to show them the way, and very early on the following day he helped them attack the enemy encampment. During the attack the man found his wife; he recognized her by her feet, which had still not lost their human shape. He approached her and, from the rear, grasped her upper lip with his right hand and her lower lip with his left hand, tugged violently, and ripped off the peccary skin, freeing her in this way from that repugnant disguise. The skin got up and ran away toward the forest. The Sanemá killed all the wild pigs, the men, the women, and the children. Pŏlawan said good bye to them, and the woman returned joyfully with the men to the rancheria.

THE HANEKASA

773 The hanekasá are a pueblo made up, in its immense majority, of women. There lives among them only one man of verile age, which insures reproduction. Only female children are born, and, when the progenitor reaches an advanced age, a male child comes who replaces his father in this pueblo of amazons. The number of males may not exceed three: a child, a man in the prime of life, and an old man.

The hanekasá by preference feed on lapa /paca/.

For each Sanemá settlement there is a corresponding hanekasá one. When two of these groups meet on the road, they fight like men. The hanekasá also fight against men. If a man, while hunting, kills a hanekasá, a woman in the neighboring tribe will die.

HARAMI

539 One day a young Sanemá man was alone in the forest. He was looking for food. After walking a considerable distance without killing a single /236/ animal, he became very angry, complaining bitterly because the animals remained in their hiding

/236 cont./
539 places (26).

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26. Taking into account what has already been pointed out as a prayer directed to Omao in order that he allow to come out those animals which he would judge as surplus in the animal kingdom, the young man's behavior can be judged as an offense against God because he would not yield to his will.

The father of the young hunter was at home sitting in front of the fire. He was a sablf. Suddenly he saw a swarm of butterflies approaching to put out the fire. A great cloud of smoke arose. The sablf heard the prolonged and penetrating howls of the Great Fox who has various members of his family living in the river. When they come out of the waters, they do not only kill the hunter who made them leave their "house," but all of his family as well. The butterflies also live in the river and are the friends of the Great Fox, whom they help to kill bad and guilty hunters. After putting out the fire they attack the family of the bad hunter, and, if the latter happens to be at home, they suck out his blood from the corners of his eyes. The sablf knew all about this and the grave danger which his son and his whole family were in, but he also knew a means of defending them against the butterflies. He caught some of them and spat on them. The butterflies immediately ceased their attack on him and died. The Great Fox kept quiet because he knew that his victim was in the forest under the protection of a powerful shaman. In this way the young hunter was saved from the teeth of the Great Fox,[1] who devours his victims and swallows them without chewing.

KASMAI

Kasmái is a man who lives in the river. Every six months, when there is a new moon, he comes out of the water to live for three days among men. This pleases them, and they regale him with a dance celebration. Kasmái enjoys himself very much at these celebrations. He comes up out of the river with his body

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539 painted red with onoto. His children paint him in the river, which they call "their home." The men give him presents of succulent food, but Kasmâi does not eat much because he is full and has an abundance of food at home. He does not remain long on earth. After three days he invites his companions to bathe in the river and suddenly disappears at the mercy of the waters.

WAU

Wau lives in the river, but he is a cayman. He is not a common cayman, however, since he is the owner of the fish. He runs as fast as the wind and chases men who fish with barbasco or who throw back into the river the bones of fish that they have eaten. Wau always carries an enormous club, and the man whom he pursues can only save himself if he succeeds in quickly climbing a tall, stout tree. /See the foreign text for the bibliography, pp. 247-263 in the original source, and the table of contents for the entire book, p. 265 in the original source./